DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 210 304 TM 810 952

TITLE The Status of Evaluation of Student Services and Academic Programs at Medium Sized Junior and Senior Colleges.

INSTITUTION Cuyahoga Community Coll., Cleveland, Ohio. Office of Educational Evaluation and Market Research Systems.

PUB DATE Dec 80
NOTE 23p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrators; *Classification; *Colleges; *Evaluation Methods; Higher Education; *Program Evaluation; *Student College Relationship; *Student Personnel Services; Two Year Colleges; Universities

ABSTRACT

The focus of this report is on student service programs of colleges and universities with a student population between twenty and thirty-five thousand. Using 39 senior colleges and 16 junior colleges, administrators of academic affairs and student services areas were asked to categorize evaluation approaches they had participated in. Respondents were asked to indicate the purpose of evaluation, the "advance organizers" or types of variables used to determine information requirements, the source of questions addressed in evaluations, the actual questions answered by evaluation, and the instruments used. Results have it that to effectively study student services at this target level, internal committees and external consultants may evaluate different aspects of the program. Just as in a traditional academic evaluation, policies, procedures and lines of authority must be established as well as a rigid chronological step-by-step procedure must be outlined. (CE)

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ED210304

Cuyahoga Community College

THE STATUS OF EVALUATION OF STUDENT SERVICES AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AT MEDIUM SIZED JUNIOR AND SENIOR COLLEGES

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DECEMBER, 1980

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Office of the Vice Chancellor for Educational Planning & Development

THE STATUS OF EVALUATION OF STUDENT SERVICES AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AT MEDIUM SIZED JUNIOR AND SENIOR COLLEGES

December, 1980

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THE STATUS OF EVALUATION OF STUDENT SERVICES
AND ACADEMIC PROGRAM AT MEDIUM SIZED JUNIOR AND SENIOR COLLEGES

I. Introduction

Evaluation of educational programs and support services is becoming increasingly important to colleges, legislators, and funding agencies. Educational evaluation has been written about extensively in the seventies. Seemingly, every dimension of evaluation has been discussed, from selecting the programs to be evaluated (Baratta, 1976) to evaluator competencies (Scriven, 1979). Professionals in the evaluation field have developed approaches (or models) to suit different purposes or perspectives of evaluation. The approaches have even been categorized according to their purpose (Stufflebeam and Webster, 1980).

The objective of this project was to solicit and catalog evaluation approaches to academic and student services programs of junior and senior colleges across the country. Much of what has been written applies to student services program evaluation as it applies to other forms of evaluation. The focus of this report is however, on student services programs. Evaluation of these programs have generally been less systematic. Models for this purpose have also not been as abundant as those available for academic program evaluation.

II. Method

Evaluation of programs in colleges and universities with a student population between twenty and thirty-five thousand were selected as the group most appropriate for the study. The sample included 55 schools 16 junior colleges and 39 senior colleges.

Administrators in the academic affairs and student services areas in each school were identified. They were mailed a questionnaire and cover letter developed by the Office of Educational Evaluation and Market Research Systems in September, 1980. The questionnaire elicited information on a number of

variables used by Stufflebeam and Webster (1980) to categorize evaluation approaches. Respondents were asked to indicate the purpose of evaluation, the "advance organizers" or types of variables used to determine information requirements, the source of questions addressed in evaluation, the actual questions answered by evaluation, and the instruments used. (Please see sample letters and questionnaire in Appendix A.)

Several responses were in the form of review or evaluation guidelines. Relevant information from these reports was transferred to questionnaires for analysis.

III. Findings

A. Response Rates

Forty-two percent, or 23, of the 55 administrators in the academic affairs area responded to the survey. Thirty-five percent, or 19, of 55 administrators in the student services area responded. Table 1 presents the breakdown of responses.

TABLE 1

Responses Breakdown by
College Level and Program Area

	Junior Colleges	Senior Colleges	Total
Academic			
sent	16	39	55
returned	5	18	23
% returned	(31)	(46)	(42)
Student Services			
sent	16	39	55
returned	5	14	19
% returned	(31)	(36)	(35)
Total			
sent	32	78	110
returned	10	32	42
	(31)	(41)	(38)

B. Evaluation of Student Service Programs

Four of 5 junior colleges and 7 of 14 senior colleges provided information which related directly to the items in the questionnaire. The 8 remaining responses indicated a variety of methodologies in use for student service evaluations. In general, it appears that

(a) programs are reviewed by comparing administrator/program objectives to performance;

(b) evaluations are conducted on an ad hoc instead of a systematic basis;

(c) programs are evaluated via the accreditation process.

A summary of the information obtained from the junior colleges and the senior colleges follows.

1. Responses to Questionnaire Items

WHAT WERE THE ADVANCE ORGANIZERS (THE TYPES OF VARIABLES USED TO DETERMINE INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS)?

The majority of junior college administrators indicated that personnel and/or instructional objectives determined what kind of information was needed to evaluate student services. One junior college polled students to determine what their needs were and used this information to evaluate program performance.

The majority of senior college administrators referred to objectives to determine information requirements for evaluation. Institutional responsibilities are used and in one case these consisted of annual report elements: accomplishments, assessment, improved and new program definitions, and cost to continue programs. Information requirements can be ascertained from established policies and procedures for conducting evaluations. These have been established more often for academic program evaluation.

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF EVALUATION?

Of the 5 junior colleges, most were interested in improving student services. Evaluations were conducted also to provide accountability information to governing bodies and to relate outcomes to objectives.

The majority of senior colleges were interested in obtaining information to improve programs and management information used to aid decision makers in administering student services.

WHO OR WHAT GROUP OF PEOPLE WERE THE SOURCE OF QUESTIONS?

The junior colleges indicated that questions came from a variety of sources: program developers, managment personnel, accrediting agencies, and students. One college pointed out that all of the examples listed under the question were sources.

Senior colleges primarily used program developers or student services' directors as sources for evaluation questions. Additional sources included deans, faculty, administrators, and students. One college developed questionnaires to collect user's perceptions of every student services area. They relied on the Student Affairs Research Office and Student Affairs staff to formulate questions.

WHAT WAS/WERE THE MAIN QUESTIONS BEING ANSWERED BY THE EVALUATION?

Junior colleges' questions included: How many students were served by the program? Was the program valuable to its users? Are objectives realistic? Are standards and objectives being met? How efficient is the program? "Which of two or more competing policies will maximize the achievement of valued outcomes at a reasonable cost?"

Half of the senior colleges indicated that they obtained

management information from student services evaluations - Were programs efficient? Were objectives realistic and being met? Were programs implemented on schedule? Were efforts duplicated? Half were interested in formative information - How can the program be improved? They were interested in perceptions of students, faculty, and staff regarding program delivery, content, and recommendations for improvement.

WHAT EVALUATION METHODS WERE USED

The junior colleges used questionnaires and interviews with staff and students. Additional methods included advisory groups and committees.

Senior colleges were evenly divided among using self studies or annual reports, ad hoc committees, administrator evaluations, and questionnaires. One college indicated that student services departments were free to use whatever methods suited them best.

2. Respondents' Comments

Comments were summarized from the questionnaires and from cover letters attached to reports. The timelines for review or evaluation vary. Student services seem to be reviewed every year or two if annual reports or administrator evaluations are the means for review. If other methods are used-questionnaires, internal committees and external consultants-student services are evaluated every three to six years. One respondent commented that evaluations should be performed annually. Other comments surfaced. On respondnet would like to find a cost effective means for evaluating outcome objectives. Another indicated that student services' evaluations are mandated by federal and state agencies. One respondnet commented that his college found annual reports and director evaluations to be more effective and cost efficient than the MBO (management by objectives)

method and program planning and budget format that they were previously using. Institutions sometimes use a combination of approaches to review or evaluate student services. Annual reviews of progress toward meeting goals are supplemented by periodic evaluations that include different focuses. It appears that one approach supplies summative information and the other provides formative information. Lastly, respondents commented that they were pleased with established evaluation guidelines or policies and procedures.

3. Summary (excluding respondents' comments)

Five junior colleges and 14 senior colleges responded to the student services evaluation survey. One junior college and 7 senior colleges responded that they do not systematically evaluate student services. Programs are reviewed by relating administrators' performance to objectives, through accreditation, or on an ad hoc basis. Four junior colleges and 7 senior colleges conduct periodic student services evaluations or have participated in student services evaluations within the last 5 years. Objectives determined information requirements for evaluation in half of these schools. Schools also used student surveys, institutional responsibilities and goals, and established evaluation guidelines to determine information requirements. Schools were evenly divided on the purpose of evaluation. Half were interested in obtaining formative information or information that could be used to improve programs. Half were interested in obtaining summative information, or management information. A small majority of schools wanted formative and summative evaluation information. Junior and senior colleges referred primarily to program developers or directors for questions to be asked in evaluation. The answers to the questions revealed

how valuable the services were to students as often as they revealted the number of students using the services or the number of objectives that were met. Schools used questionnaires and interviews of staff and students to gather information. Senior colleges also used self studies, administrator evaluations, and ad hoc committees to acquire information.

C. Academic Program Evaluation

Five junior and 18 senior college administrators responded to the academic programs evaluation survey. One junior and 6 senior college administrators provided information that was not adaptable to the questionnaire format. The majority of these schools have been or are becoming engaged in program review or evaluation. One school holds the individual departments responsible for continually evaluating its programs and periodically hiring external consultants to conduct evaluations. Another school evaluates programs but the approach does not lend itself to the questionnaire format. Two colleges do not conduct systematic evaluation but obtain information through accreditation evaluations, regular faculty and student contact, and/or progress reports. Two colleges are in the process of developing policies and procedures for evaluating academic programs. Academic programs' evaluation information gathered from the questionnaires or reports (policies and procedures) follows.

1. Responses to Questionnaire

WHAT WERE THE ADVANCE ORGANIZERS (THE TYPES OF VARIABLES USED TO DETERMINE INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS)?

Junior colleges' responses to this item varied. Respondents referred to personnel objectives, societal values and needs, personnel/institutional responsibilities, and documents developed by a governing body containing established guidelines. One

respondent commented that information requirements were determined by a need to be accountable.

Half of the senior colleges determined information requirements by referring to established policies and procedures. In one case information requirements were inferred from the "Mission, Means and Goal" statement of the university. Other advance organizers included institutional responsibilities, self study reports, and goals and objectives. One college indicated that resource distribution, program accreditation, and the "need to control graduate enrollment" precipitated the need for information.

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION?

The junior colleges' evaluations of academic programs were conducted to supply information for making decisions, supply information needed to fund and direct programs, to identify and assess the potential costs and benefits of competing policies for a given institution or society, and to ensure that programs are as good as they can be within the limits of available resources. The purposes of junior and senior college evaluations were similar. Junior and senior colleges evaluated academic programs to obtain management information and information that could be used to improve programs. Evaluations assessed the quality, need, and efficiency of various program dimensions. Information is used to improve programs and to aid decision makers (often to determine the best distribution of resources).

WHO OR WHAT GROUP OF PEOPLE WERE THE SOURCE OF QUESTIONS?

The majority of the junior colleges referred to faculty and administrators for the questions to be answered in evaluations. A governing body was the source of questions at one college.

The senior colleges relied mainly on faculty and administrators. The Board of Regents was referred to in two instances. Research scholars, literature searches, accreditation teams, and professional association groups also served as sources for questions.

WHAT WAS/WERE THE MAIN QUESTIONS BEING ANSWERED BY THE EVALUATION?

This item elicited a wide range of responses from junior and senior colleges. Responses from the 4 junior colleges indicated that they wanted to know whether the curriculum was effective and relevant, whether objectives and standards were being met, whether program/personnel could be improved, whether resources were adequate, what resources and actions were needed to improve the unit, how well the students were being prepared for future jobs, whether industry's needs were being met and whether there was evidence to continue programs.

Many specific questions were answered by program evaluation in junior and senior colleges. It appeared that the majority of the questions related to the schools desire to determine the quality of specific program areas or diminsions. The program dimensions in Table 2 seemed to be the focuses for academic program evaluation. Examples of issues within each dimension are presented.

WHAT EVALUATION METHODS WERE USED?

The junior colleges used peer observations, faculty review, self studies, external consultants, and questionnaires.

The majority of the senior colleges obtained self studies or quantitative information from the department to be evaluated. The majority used external consultants and interviews. Additional methods included questionnaires, graduate surveys, ad hoc and internal committees, observations, and accreditation reports.

TABLE 2

Program Dimensions and Issues
In Academic Program Evaluation

Dimensions	
Program	context, description, goals and objectives, curriculum appropriateness and completeness, continuing need for program, program administration, strengths and weaknesses, projections, degrees granted considering staff and enrollment, program and curriculum compared to program and curriculum at other schools, accreditation . . .
Resources	adequate, what is needed, how are priorities for resource allocation determined . . .
Faculty and Staff	morale, improvement, equity in workload assignment, tenure and promotion policies, research quality and quantity, balance between research, teaching, and service . . .
Students	quality of current students and graduates, graduate performance, outlook for present and future graduates . . .
Facilities and Services	academic and student support, equipment, libraries, computers, space, effectiveness of academic counseling and guidance program . . .
Program operation, involvement, and development	effective organization of department operation and use of staff and facilities, contribution to school's public service activities, involvement with other departments, quality of supporting programs, student-faculty communication, student-faculty understanding of degree requirements, changes in student interest, changes in professional emphases and requirements, changes in employment opportunities, changes in regional and national interest, changes in equipment and methods changes in school's or department's objectives, progress, statistical trends bearing on enrollment or employment, directions, self evaluation . . .

2. Respondents' Comments

Respondents indicated that evaluations occur on a 5 to 8-year cycle. One respondent indicated that departments are evaluated every 3 years, external and internal reviews alternating. In another school, the faculty evaluates curriculum every 2 years and revises

it to meet students' needs according to enrollment trends. Two respondents commented that the evaluation process is time consuming takes two years to complete an evaluation at one school. One respondnet from a senior college with 25,000 students indicated that $12,000 annually are well spent on evalution. Another respondent pointed out that a year or two ago each program evaluation cost $4,000 including the cost of two to five external consultants at $700 each. One respondent stressed the importance of qualitative judgements in evaluations. Another commented that administrators provide quantitative data and faculty provide qualitative judgements. One respondent commented that programs are selected for review by a system of universities of which the university is a member. It was also pointed out that program evaluations are mandated by the Board of Regents in some schools. One respondent said that reports of the review process and results are shared with a Board of Regents. One college's evaluation system includes a procedure to monitor progress one to two years after evalution. Problems include "reaching a consensus on goals," "getting valid and reliable indicators," "overcoming traditional preoccupation with process variables," and "obtaining post-graduate student outcomes." Another concern was the need to make clear to personnel who prepare self studies the kind and amount of information to be included in self studies. One respondent commented that numerous articles written about "the core curriculum" may be worthwhile to start reading about evaluation. Several respondents indicated that their schools were pleased with the evaluation system they had adopted.

3. Summary (excluding respondents' comments)

Five junior and 18 senior colleges responded to the academic

programs evaluation survey. One junior and 6 senior colleges did not have the kind of information appropriate for the questionnaire. The majority of these colleges were engaged or becoming engaged in program review or evaluation. Four junior and 12 senior colleges provided information in terms of the questionnaire variables. Junior colleges determined information requirements for evaluation from objectives, societal values and needs, personnel/institutional responsibilities and established evaluation guidelines. Half of the senior colleges referred to established guidelines. Other variables included institutional responsibilities, self study reports, goals and objectives. Schools obtained primarily management information from evaluations to aid decision makers. They also obtained information that could be used to improve programs. The majority of the schools referred to faculty and administrators for the questions to be asked in evaluation. Sources of questions included Boards of Regents, research scholars, the evalution literature, accreditation teams, and professional association groups. Questions answered by evaluations concern quality and efficiency. They relate to such dimensions as curriculum resources, faculty and staff, students, facilities and services and program operation, involvement and development. Specific issues and criteria related to these dimensions vary. They are outlined in established guidelines or policies and proceudres for evaluation that have been adopted by schools. Evalution questions at junior colleges included: Were objectives and standards being met? Was the curriculum relevant and effective? Were the resources adequate, and if not, what additional resources were needed? Could the progam/personnel be improved? How well were students being prepared for future jobs? Were industry's needs being met? Was there evidence to continue

programs? Evaluation methods at junior college included self studies, peer observations, faculty review, external consultants, and questionnaires. The majority of senior colleges obtained self studies or quantitative information from departments. They used external consultants who conducted interviews. Additional methods included questionnaires, graduate surveys, ad hoc and internal committees, observations, and accreditation reports.

IV. Discussion

The object of this project was to solicit and categorize approaches used in evaluating academic and student services programs. The surveyed schools indicated that both kinds of programs are reviewed. It appears that schools have been evaluating academic programs longer than they have been evaluating student services programs. Clearly defined policies and procedures have been established for evaluating academic programs. The evaluation guidelines that respondents generously provided were interesting. One variation included separate guidelines for departmental self studies, internal committee reviews and external consulatnt reviews. It was pointed out that there were separate guidelines for graduate and undergraduate programs. The policies and procedures in the documents contain well thought out and clear directions. Lines of authority are established, the chronological step-by-step procedures are outlined. Flow charts of the evaluation process are presented. The policies and procedures establish how internal committees and external consultants are chosen, the questions to be addressed by the evaluation members, and the formats of departmental self studies. Samples of departmental questionnaires were included in a few documents. What was especially clear in the majority of documents were the steps to be taken in the evaluation process.

Administrators commented that a number of factors were considered in selecting the programs to be reviewed. These factors included upcoming

accreditation evaluations, the similarity of programs to be evaluated, the impending decisions or judgements that needed to be made, length of time the director has been in office, or length of time the program had been in existence. Respondents pointed out that they are flexible in scheduling programs for review.

Collecting departmental self studies and quantitative information is the first step in a number of guidelines documents. Department chairpersons generally comment and provide quantitative information on the operations and organization of the department. One institution used the following categories to solicit information: "program goals and objectives," "curriculum," "resources," "continuing need for the program," "program administration," "summary of strengths and needed improvements," and "projections." Some schools also mail questionnaires to faculty and students during the self-study period. The data is collected and shared with the internal review committee and external consultants who have already been selected. The reviewers proceed to evaluate the programs according to guidelines. They interview faculty, administrators, and students, and tour the facilities including libraries. Internal committees and external consultants may evaluate different aspects of the program. The internal committee members generally work together whereas the external consultants work separately and prepare separate reports. The information is combined in a single report and delivered to the individual department for comment. All concerned individuals may discuss recommendations and actions to be taken.

In processing information from this project, it should be kept in mind that the survey sample was relatively small. If more junior colleges were participants in the survey, it might have been possible to identify response trends as it was possible to do with the senior college questionnaires. The evaluation literature may provide a framework within which information from this survey may be placed.

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APPENDIX

Cuyahoga Community College

District Administrative Services
700 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
216/241-5966

September 19, 1980

Dear _____

The Office of Educational Evaluation and Market Research Systems at Cuyahoga Community College is interested in the evaluation of student services and student service programs. We are polling two-year and four-year colleges to determine the extent to which student services are systematically reviewed and what evaluation methods are used. We have defined student services as including, but not necessarily limited to academic or personal counseling, career planning and placement, student activities, assessment for academic placement, financial aid services and any other "non-academic service." We are also requesting academic programs evaluation information from _____ at your college.

In an attempt to catalogue evaluation designs into evaluation approaches, we have used the method outlined by Stufflebeam and Webster in their article, "An analysis of alternative approaches to evaluation," published in Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 2 May/June 1980. We have included some examples from the Stufflebeam and Webster article to give you an idea of the types of information in which we are interested. These descriptors are intended as guides for you and do not limit the possibilities of answers to the questions. If your institution has conducted an evaluation of student services during the past five years, we would appreciate your answers to the following questions. If you are not the person responsible for evaluation please forward this letter to the appropriate person.

We feel that evaluation is becoming more important to colleges, legislators, and funding agencies and that sound decisions are based upon thorough and careful evaluation design and procedure. CCC plans to survey 50 two- and four-year colleges about their activities in student services and to catalogue this information so that it will be readily available to planners and decision makers. We would be happy to share our findings with you. Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

Bonita B. Vargo
Educational Evaluation and
Market Research Systems

enc:

Cuyahoga Community College is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

September 19, 1980

Dear

The Office of Educational Evaluation and Market Research Systems at Cuyahoga Community College is interested in the evaluation of academic programs. We are polling two-year and four-year colleges to determine the extent to which academic programs are systematically reviewed and what evaluation methods are used. We are also requesting student services evaluation information from _____ at your college.

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Sincerely,

Bonita B. Vargo
Educational Evaluation and
Market Research Systems

enc:

CCC Survey on Evaluation

Name of School _____

Academic Programs or Student Services Programs _____

1. What were the advance organizers (the types of variables used to determine information requirements--e.g., set of objectives; personnel/institutional responsibilities; problem statements/hypotheses; decision situations; "societal values and needs; areas of the curriculum, published tests, and specified norm groups," etc.--Stufflebeam and Webster) _____

2. What was the purpose of the evaluation (e.g., "to identify and assess the potential costs and benefits of competing policies for a given institution or society," "to relate outcomes to objectives," "to supply continuously the information needed to fund, direct, and control programs"; "to provide a knowledge and value base for making and defending decisions"; to create a positive public image for an object"; etc.--Stufflebeam and Webster). Please be specific.

3. Who or what group of people were the source of questions (e.g., "program developers," "constituents," "test publishers," "management personnel," "accrediting agencies," "decision makers (administrators, parents, students, teachers) their constituents, and evaluators," "legislators, policy boards and special interest groups) etc.--Stufflebeam and Webster)

4. What was/were the main questions being answered by the evaluation (e.g., "Are program activities being implemented on schedule, at a reasonable cost, and with expected results?" " What are the effects of a given intervention on specified outcome variables?" "Which students achieved which objectives?" "Which of two or more competing policies will maximize the achievement of valued outcomes at a reasonable cost?" "How should a given enterprise be planned, executed, and recycled in order to foster human growth and development at a reasonable cost?" "Are institutions, programs and personnel meeting minimum standards; and how can they be improved?" etc.--Stufflebeam and Webster) Please be specific.

5. What methods were used (if instruments were used, please include samples or references)

6. We would welcome your comments. Please mention any special circumstances, how the evaluation worked out, if it could be improved, barriers to implementation, any thoughts that would help someone else conduct a similar evaluation.

Thank you. Please return to Cuyahoga Community College in the enclosed envelope.